

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2019, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit trained criminal law enforcement personnel on identifying child labor, child trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation of children. The government also conducted public awareness-raising seminars at primary and secondary schools, reaching over 1,500 students and 70 teachers. Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Gaps remain in the legal framework, as the minimum age for hazardous work falls below international standards and there is no law to prohibit the use of children in the production of drugs. In addition, the law does not prohibit the use of children for prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. (1,2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		105.5

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2018, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020. (3) Data were unavailable from International Labor Organization's analysis, 2020. (4)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Activities unknown (1,5)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation (1,2)

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

Limited research and information received from various sources suggest that some children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation, including by their relatives, in exchange for money or goods. (1,2)

All children in the country are able to access education. (5,6) However, inadequate public transportation for children in rural villages causes them to walk long distances, which may make attending school difficult. (5) Children out of school are vulnerable to engaging in child labor.

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

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Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
 UN CRC	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for hazardous work and the prohibition of using children in illicit activities.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Article 8 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (7)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		Schedule, Part I, Articles 1–2 and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (7)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		Part I, Sections 3–4, and Articles 1–2 and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act; Section VI(37) of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Occupational Safety and Health Act of 2017 (7,8)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Chapter XII, Part 207 of the Criminal Code (9)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Part II, Articles 5–8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (10)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Part II, Article 7 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (10)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*†		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Part I, Article 2 of the Education Act (6)
Free Public Education	Yes		Part III, Articles 14–16 of the Education Act (6)

* No conscription (11)

† No standing military (12)

The government has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited to children. (7,8) In addition, the law does not prohibit the use of children for prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances. (10)

The minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. (6,7)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor	Enforces child labor laws through its Department of Labor, and refers victims to appropriate social services. (13)
Royal Police Force	Makes criminal arrests, including those involving the worst forms of child labor. Addresses human trafficking through the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit (ATIPU), refers victims to appropriate social services, and funds financial requests made by ATIPU. (14)
Ministry of Social Development	Maintains the Child Protection Unit, which includes Child Protection Officers who report cases of child abuse. (15)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2019, labor law enforcement agencies in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including allocating resources.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$612,991 (5)	\$626,076 (2)
Number of Labor Inspectors	6 (5)	6 (2)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (5)	No (2)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	N/A (5)	N/A (2)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (5)	N/A (2)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (5)	No (2)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	33 (5)	42 (2)
Number Conducted at Worksite	33 (5)	42 (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (5)	0 (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	0 (5)	0 (2)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	0 (5)	0 (2)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (5)	Yes (2)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (5)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (5)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (5)	Yes (2)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (5)	Yes (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (5)	Yes (2)

The Ministry of Labor, through its Department of Labor, can inspect all sectors and is responsible for investigating labor violations. If the Department finds a criminal violation, it forwards the case to the Royal Police Force. (13)

During the reporting period, the Department of Labor reported that the number of inspectors and funding was sufficient; however, a lack of appropriate resources, such as computers and training, hampered the Department's abilities to enforce child labor laws. (2,5)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including allocating resources.

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Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (5)	Yes (2)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (5)	N/A (2)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (5)	Yes (2)
Number of Investigations	0 (5)	0 (2)
Number of Violations Found	0 (5)	0 (2)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (5)	0 (2)
Number of Convictions	0 (5)	0 (2)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	0 (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (5)	Yes (2)

In 2019, more than 100 police officers received initial and refresher training on child labor, child trafficking, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. According to the police department, officers received sufficient training; however, insufficient resources hampered the capacity of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit to combat human trafficking on both islands, and especially in remote, mountainous areas. (2, 16)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8). However, gaps exist that hinder effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including efforts to address all forms of child labor.

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons	Develops a national plan to address human trafficking, coordinates the collection of data among government agencies, establishes policies to enable government agencies to work with NGOs to prevent human trafficking and assist victims, and provides training to all relevant government officials and authority figures. Chaired by the Prime Minister. (10) Comprises representatives from police, immigration, public prosecutions, social services, gender affairs, and the Department of Labor. (16) In 2019, trained more than 100 police officers on child labor, child trafficking, and child prostitution, and conducted various awareness-raising events. (2, 16)

Research shows that there is no specific coordinating mechanism dedicated solely to addressing issues related to the worst forms of child labor, outside the scope of human trafficking.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including implementation.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Child Protection Policy Framework (2015–2020)	Strengthens national child protection strategies and programs, and ensures effective coordination among all organizations and entities working for the protection and development of children in the country, including child labor victims. (17) Research was unable to determine whether the National Child Protection Policy Framework was implemented during the reporting period.
National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons (2016–2020)	Establishes procedures to eradicate human trafficking, including training for frontline staff and other relevant stakeholders; conduct awareness-raising campaigns; and provide victim protection and assistance. Administered by the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons, which is chaired by the Prime Minister as head of the Ministry of National Security. (16, 18) In 2019, increased training for frontline officers, including ATIPU staff, Passport and Immigration Department officials, and 79 police officers. (16)
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Countering Human Trafficking in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Outlines the responsibilities of each signatory agency in combating human trafficking and the worst forms of child labor. Assigns tasks and responsibilities among nine government stakeholders regarding trafficking in persons. (19) Includes the Department of Labor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce, ATIPU, and others. (20) In 2017, the MOU was extended to 2020. During 2019, the government continued to support the MOU between signatory agencies. (16)

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VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2019, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Government-funded educational programs†	Provide free meals to students and low-income families through the Supplementary Feeding Program. (21) In 2019, the government also continued to fund other programs, such as the Book Loan Program, the Street Children Rehabilitation Program, and the Foster Care Program. (2)
Zero Hunger Trust Fund†	Provides meals, materials, and uniforms to children in need. (22) Research indicates that during the reporting period, limited resources prevented the program from sufficiently assisting all children in need. (2)

† Program is funded by the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

In 2019, the government conducted public awareness-raising seminars at primary and secondary schools, reaching more than 1,500 students and 70 teachers. (2)

Although the government has implemented programs to address educational and food needs, research found no evidence that it has carried out programs specifically to assist children who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation. (23)

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited to children, in consultation with workers' and employers' organizations, and ensure that the minimum age for hazardous work is age 18.	2009 – 2019
	Ensure that the laws regarding commercial sexual exploitation of children are sufficient and do not only apply to human trafficking.	2017 – 2019
	Ensure that laws prohibit the use of a child in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2011 – 2019
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2019
	Raise the minimum age for work to the age up to which education is compulsory.	2018 – 2019
Enforcement	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties for labor law violations.	2016 – 2019
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by providing sufficient resources to conduct labor inspections, including computers and training.	2015 – 2019
	Ensure that labor inspectors are provided refresher courses related to child labor.	2018 – 2019
	Increase the amount of resources, including personnel and vehicles, for the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit.	2017 – 2019
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat all forms of child labor.	2019
Government Policies	Ensure that the National Child Protection Policy Framework is implemented.	2019
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2017 – 2019
	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children in rural communities, by providing public transportation.	2018 – 2019
	Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation.	2017 – 2019
	Ensure that the Zero Hunger Trust Fund program has sufficient resources to assist all children in need.	2019

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